

SNCO SURVIVAL GUIDE TO MILITARY WRITING

SMSgt Tracy Wilhelm
82 MDSS/CCS

In today's competitive Air
Force

The Pen is Mightier Than the
Sword



“Give every report or award
you write the attention and
effort you would like given to
yours”

Over View

- Total Person Concept
- Bullet Statements
- Constructing Bullet Statement
- Editing and Feedback

Total Person Concept

The final product should answer the following questions:

- What you do for the Air Force
- What you do for self-improvement
- What you do for the community

Bullet Statement

- What is a bullet statement ?
- **Definition:** A concise written statement of a single idea or accomplishment and its impact.

Bullet Statements

- **Single Idea Bullet (SIB) Definition**
 - A concise group of words explaining a single idea or thought.
- **Specific Achievement Bullet (SAB) Definition** - Describes an accomplishment *and* its result or impact!

Bullet Statements

- Ideal bullet is a single line stating
 - What the person did
 - How she/he did it
 - What was the impact/results

“Led 10 member team; coordinated location/placement of forward medical facility—unit fully operational within 24 hours

Constructing A Bullet

- **Step 1: Gather the Facts**
- **Step 2: Develop Bullet Statement**
- **Step 3 Fine Tune**

Step 1: Gather Facts

- Job Performance/Job Knowledge
 - Describe:
 - Quality and Consistency of work
 - Specific examples of actions taken
 - Problems encountered/solved
 - Compare performance to peers
 - Describe impacts/results
 - How actions resulted in mission accomplishment

Step 1: Gather Facts

- Leadership
 - Describe:
 - Lead/motivate subordinates
 - Set/enforces standards
 - Maintains discipline
 - Describe leadership traits

Step 1: Gather Facts

- Standards/Conduct/Professional Qualities
 - Describe actions that exhibit:
 - Loyalty, honesty, integrity, respect
 - Level of dedication to job
 - Personal responsibilities
 - Exceeding AF standards
 - Support of unit, group, wing

Step 1: Gather Facts

- Management/organization
 - Give examples of planning and organization
 - Day to day work or special projects/additional duties
 - Include impacts/results
 - Describe other actions that exhibit ability to plan
 - Balancing continuing education with work

Step 1: Gather Facts

- Judgment and decisions
 - Give examples of decisions
 - Describe the circumstances, assumptions, and choices
 - Include impacts/results

Step 1: Gather Facts

- Communications
 - Reports written, briefings given
- Training
 - Keep track of PME/OJT/up-grade training
 - Special training accomplishments
 - Highest scores in class or class standing
 - Early completion
 - Compare to peers

Step 1: Gather Facts

- Outside Activities
 - Describe involvement, including specific actions/activities
 - Church
 - Youth Organizations
 - Civic Organizations
 - Intramural or community sports
 - May use to show leadership traits

Step 2 Develop Bullet Statement

- Use strong action verbs
- The action
- The outcome or result

Step 2 Develop Bullet Statement

• Action Verbs

- **Avoid weak verbs**
- **Maximum impact**
- **Use past tense**
 - “Improved”
 - “Created”

Step 2 Develop Bullet Statement

Action Verbs

Instead of ...

Improved

Started

Made

Led

Saved

Received

Spoke

Say...

Revamped,
rescued

Pioneered,
initiated

Created, built

Spearheaded,
piloted

Recaptured,
recouped

Step 2 Develop Bullet Statement

• **Action**

- **Job performance/knowledge**
- **Leadership**
- **Standards/conduct/professionalism**
- **Management/organization**
- **Judgment/decisions**
- **Communications**
- **Training**
- **Outside Activities**

Step 2 Develop Bullet Statement

● **Outcome or Result**

- **Quality** - best, most successful, top %
- **Quantity** - Scope of effort and effect
- **Time** - hours saves, ahead of schedule
- **Cost** - man-hours, \$\$, resources
- **Problems encountered/solved**

Step 2 Develop Bullet Statement

Active Voice

“smooth transition was achieved”

“achieved smooth transition”

“patient’s life was saved”

“saved patient’s life”

Step 3 Fine Tune the Bullet

• Accuracy

- Are the facts and figures correct?
 - Verify questionable information
 - Ask questions, correct errors or inaccuracies

Step 3 Fine Tune the Bullet

Brevity

- Can you reduced the number of words or length of words?
- Use terms that are more direct and/or powerful
- Use punctuation in place of words.
- Keep the facts/details while paring down unnecessary terms

Step 3 Fine Tune the Bullet

• Specificity

- Answer
 - Who
 - What
 - When
 - Where
 - How

Step 3 Fine Tune the Bullet

• Eliminate

- Articles (a, an, the, etc)
- Helping verbs (can, would, should)
- Forms of be (am, is, are, was, were)
- linking verbs (look, smell, feel, taste)
- Prepositions
- use sparingly (in, under, during, within, over, etc)

Step 3 Fine Tune the Bullet

Lead-in

- Use sparingly, takes up space
- Should be followed by fact or accomplishment

• Hard charger

• Leader of the pack

• Community advocate

• Shinning star

• Head and shoulders above peers

Step 3 Fine Tune the Bullet

• Jargon

- Spell out unique acronyms
- Save space by defining acronyms in job description
 - APU
 - ER
 - CT

Step 3 Fine Tune the Bullet

White Space

- Is universally perceived as NOT GOOD!
- Is an effective method to intentionally send a NEGATIVE message on a mediocre performer

Step 4 Attention to Detail

- Write to your audience
 - EPR will not always be reviewed by an audience educated in your career field
- Read Report
 - At least three times
 - Read from Bottom to top
 - Read out loud

Step 4 Attention to Detail

- Format and spelling errors
 - USE SPELL CHECK!!!
- Capitalization
- Numbers
 - Zero to nine spell out
 - 10 or above state value
- Pride in Authorship
 - Leave it at the door
 - Have product reviewed by a trusted agent

Examples

Weak

- Demonstrated emergency skills during motor vehicle accident...triaged and treated injured patients...safely transported them to hospital

Examples

Fair

- Provided professional emergency care to victims of motor vehicle accident... carefully removed two patients from damaged vehicle...rapidly transported to hospital

Examples

Strong

- First responder to vehicle accident; extricated/transported two patients—saved lives

Exercise # 1

• Facts

- Increased Appointments in the clinic
- Decreased waiting time for dental appointments is now less than 5 days
- Productivity is up over 25% from last year

Exercise # 1

• Bullet

- Reduced appointment time from 7 to 5 days; increased productivity 25%

Exercise # 2

• Facts

- Appointed to be NCOIC of metal finishing element, instead of other NCOs. Quickly improved moral and productivity; rates for remaking products were reduced within first month on the job by 13%

Exercise # 2

• Bullet

Selected NCOIC over senior technicians;
morale at all time high—remakes rates
dropped 13% in first month

Exercise # 3

• Facts

- Organized lab portion of 2 health fairs, performed cholesterol tests. Received letter of appreciation for efforts. Switched from sending specimens for reference lab testing from a civilian lab to a military lab, saving thousands of \$

Exercise # 3

• Bullet

- Orchestrated two wing health fairs, provided cholesterol test for 275— efforts recognized by MDG/CC

Review

- Bullet Statements
- Constructing Bullet Statement
- Editing and Feedback